

Language Use Construction in Discourse: Exploring Youth Identities in Hausa Rap Music

Abstract

This article explores Hausa rap as a type of popular culture for the 21st century, which not only reflects the multilingual, multi-ethnic base of Hausa youth, but also constitutes an active and dynamic site for the youth to encourage the formation of new, hybrid identities in discursive practices. The article is qualitative in approach as such; examples were drawn from lyrics of the Hausa rap singers to highlight the context of their discursive practices in representing their identity. Fundamentally, this article adopts systemic functional linguistics (SFL), using the concept critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach as a mode of data evaluation.

Introduction

The present article identifies with discourse analysis (DA) as one of the key practical approaches to the study of popular music, particularly Hausa rap music. It explores the context of social construction of youth identities in Hausa rap. Basically in Hausa rap, singers draw from both Hausa and English, using whichever language they found appropriate to a particular situation in their language construction.¹ This makes approaches to language use in the musical rhythm, to be grammatically functional.² In view of this, the present article explores Hausa rap beyond grammatical approaches but rather in functional perspectives. Therefore, the present article was framed within the theoretical framework of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) from the basis of a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach in investigating Hausa rap in order to identify how youth and their music reproduce and resist societal and political manifestations in their lyrics.

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¹ Anas Sa'idu Muhammad, 'Ethnomusicology and the Features of Language Use in Hausa Rap Genre', paper presented at the 1st International Conference on Hausa Studies in the 21st century, Kano, Nigeria: Department of Nigerian Languages, Faculty of Arts and Islamic Studies (FAIS), Bayero University (BUK), 10–13 November 2014, p. 9.

² James Paul Gee, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method*, New York: Routledge Publishing, 2005, p. 55.

Problem statement

Nigeria is a country blessed with various cultures having over 555 spoken native languages which indicates the multilingual character of the nation. Among their speakers, the Hausa/Fulani constitute 29%, the Yoruba 20% and the Igbo 17% of the country's population, whereas the remaining one-third makes up the 34% belonging to other ethnic groups.³ Therefore, the elegance of the Hausa language has given rise to issues in contemporary music, particularly the popular music that plays a central role in the lives of young people.⁴ This is certainly obvious in Northern Nigeria, where rap music has been popularised among the youth and serves as an avenue to signify their identity and a forum to reveal their ideas within their understanding.

In a similar context, studies done in the area of language use relate to social issues with a strong emphasis unfolding in the cultural study of language⁵, and is compatible with a deeper sensitivity to critical social issues.⁶ In justifying these claims, it was further argued that the approaches to CDA and the justification of SFL allows a musical discourse to be interpreted as social and functional practice; which represents specific means of social environments. However, the present article found that there is a crucial need to explore how far language use relating to youth identity is critically functions in Hausa rap music. Basically, exploring the language construction of the Hausa rap genre will help in revealing Hausa youth's social identities in order to facilitate the thoughtful voices of the youth in order to be more contributory to fields of knowledge.

The following are the research objectives of the present article: (1) to explore the strategic discourse practices with relation to youth identity in Hausa rap; (2) to identify the factors that influences the social construction of language among Hausa rap singers signifying their discursive identity.

The following are the research questions of the present article: (1) what is the strategic discourse practice in Hausa rap and how does it relate to youth identity; (2) what influences the social construction of language among Hausa rap singers signifying their discursive identity?

³ Temitope Abiodun Balogun, 'An Endangered Nigerian Indigenous Language: The Case of Yoruba Language', *African NEBULA*, Vol. 6, 2013, p. 70.

⁴ Perhaps, it might be the hidden idea behind various scholars including Professor Rose Merry Beck, in her work 'Urban Languages in Africa', *Africa Spectrum*, Vol. 45, No. 3, 2010, pp. 11–41. In addition with Professor Tope Omoniyi in his study, 'Hip-hop through the World Englishes Lens: A Response to Globalization', in *World Englishes: Symposium on World Englishes in Popular Culture*, Jaimie S. Lee and Yamuna Kachru (eds), Vol. 25, No. 2, 2006, pp. 195–208; and so on, both affirm that music is a global language that can reach across all races and religion citing examples from Kenya and Nigerian rappers' identity exhibition respectively.

⁵ Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic*, London: Edward Arnold Publishing, 1978.

⁶ Teun A. van Dijk, *Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis: Discourse and Society*, Oxford: Berg Publishing, 1993.

Fundamentally, a literature review involves systematic identification, location, and analysis of documents containing information related to the research problem.⁷ Research within the perspective of rap music has driven the attention of various scholars around the globe. Basically, language use construction as identified by various scholars refers to the context of language in relation to real world problems.⁸ In reality, the variation of interest among scholars has resulted in the analysis of rap music in general to have been observed from the various perspectives which are certainly of different dimensions.⁹

Approaches to language use are diverse and complex, which can be analysed or studied from different perspectives.¹⁰ As such, approaches to language use in rap music are dynamic, which are rich in imagery and metaphor symbolising social change in the voices of youth. In addition, with global viewpoint, the effects of rap music on global culture have generated the attention of various researchers interested in the music analysis from different fields of endeavour.¹¹ As such, the analysis of rap music arises out of varieties of disciplines including linguistics, sociology, psychology, discourse analysis, anthropology, etc.

For instance, a study of hip-hop culture in young urban Black Americans showed authenticity of language use and other aspects of identity such as race, as well as class differences in global (and particularly American) rap music. More importantly, the researcher was interested in finding out how local hip-hop scenes use language to express their identities. The findings show that the expression of thoughts in hip-hop is so personal, that it tends to be grounded in local or regional syntax, dialect, slang and vernacular. The researcher also found that the revelation of identity in discourse construction could be based within the practitioner's unique situations,

⁷ Lorraine R. Gay, Geoffrey E. Mills and Peter W. Airasian. *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Application*, Boston: Addison Wesley Publishing, 2006, p. 39.

⁸ James Paul Gee, *How to Do Discourse Analysis – A Toolkit*, U.S.A and Canada: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Groups, 2011, p. vix.

⁹ Taiwo Babalola, Rotimi Taiwo, 'Code Switching in Contemporary Nigerian Hip-Hop Music', *Otupale Online Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 1, 2009, pp. 1–26; Misty Campbell, 'Rapping Gender and Violence? Addressing Violence and Gender with a Content Analysis of Rap Lyrics', Unpublished Master's Thesis on Criminology and Criminal Justice, Kansas City: Faculty of Missouri-Kansas City, College of Illinois, 2011; Cecelia Cutler, 'Hip-Hop Language in Sociolinguistics and Beyond', *Language and Linguistic Compass*, Vol. 1, No. 5, 2007, pp. 519–538; Msi a Kibona Clark, 'The Struggle for the Hip-Hop Authenticity and against Commercialisation in Tanzania', *Journal of Pan-African Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3, 2013, pp. 1–21; Anreas Staehr and Lian Malai Madsen, 'Standard Language in Urban Rap: Social Media, Linguistic Practice and Ethnographic Context', *Tilburg Papers in Cultural Studies: Paper 94*, Southern Netherlands: Tilburg University, 2014, pp. 1–29; Elina Westiinen, 'Bättre Folk – Critical Sociolinguistic Commentary in Finnish Rap Music', *Tilburg Papers in Cultural Studies: Paper 16*, Southern Netherlands: Tilburg University 2011, pp. 1–17; to mention but a few.

¹⁰ Michael McCarthy, Christian Matthiessen and Diana Slade, 'Discourse Analysis', in *An Introduction to Applied Linguistics*, Norbert Schmitt, London: Hodder Publishing, 2010, pp. 53–69.

¹¹ Tope Omoniyi and Goodith White, *The Sociolinguistics of Identity*, New York: Continuum Publishing, 2006.

which can be understood by others in similar situations if they understand the verbal references, analogies, illustrations and other uses of lyrics as the message.

In addition, similar trends were noted in another study, which examines Hausa rap genres within the approach of critical discourse analysis, which stems from the critical theory that sees language use as a form of social practice.¹² The researcher argued that the intersection and interrelationships between languages and social interaction can be attributed with a CDA approach; particularly in analysing Hausa rap music. Thus, the findings indicated that Hausa rap music shapes language use towards issues concerning societal and political dominance in Nigeria, particularly on issues that are pertinent to youth within the northern region. However, the present article is different from the studies reviewed above because the current article examines the language use construction in the Hausa rap genre and it will contribute in revealing the youth's social identities in expressing their thoughts, feelings, and alienation.

The conceptual and theoretical framework: Methodological perspectives

To begin with, the methodological approach adopted in the present article is a qualitative analysis of sampled Hausa rap singers, particularly of Lil'T, Kano Ryderz, Ziriums, and Prince Zango in deriving data mainly from the Hausa rap lyrics signifying the issues that require clarification which are pertinent to youth identity.

In the broadest terms, research frameworks either theoretical or conceptual in a particular study are constructed in a number of different ways depending on its research objectives, questions, and hypothetical perspectives in relation to variables of the study.¹³ Principally, this article is on the view that a conceptual and theoretical framework functions in research in order to identify the starting point of the research problem. Based on the fact that a theoretical framework describes a phenomenon integrated into a concise statement or question¹⁴ while developing a particular study. On the other hand, the conceptual framework of a study signifies the formation of basic ideas, designs, plans or strategies based on giving facts which can be explained in the written or visual presentation either graphically, or in narrative form.¹⁵

¹² Anas Sa'idu Muhammad, 'A Critical Discourse Analysis on Hausa Rap Genre', in *Proceedings of the International Conference on Language, Literature, Culture and Education (ICLLCE): Intercontinental Dialogue of Interdisciplinary Circle on Science, Arts & Innovation (ICSAI)*, Lokman Abd. Wahid, Fazidah Fariyah Md. Ali, Salahuddin Isma'il and Mohd Iskandar Abdul Wahab (eds), Vol. 1, No. 1, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Stratford International Language Centre, 2014, pp. 111–117.

¹³ Marianne Jorgensen and Louise J. Phillips, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*, London: Sage Publishing, 2002, p. 141.

¹⁴ Geoffrey Marczyk, David DeMatteo and David Festinger, *Essentials of Research Design and Methodology*, Canada: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2005, p. 31.

¹⁵ John Creswell, *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*, Boston: Pearson Publishing, 2014; Zoltan Dörnyei, *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics: Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Methodologies*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

It is important to mention that, the conceptual framework of the present article is based within a critical discourse analysis (CDA), which broadly deals with the critical analysis of language in its contexts of use¹⁶, which evaluates the language above the level of the sentence either in spoken or written forms. This study provides approaches to CDA from language use found in Hausa rap lyrics as a form of social practice which systematically reflects crucial awareness of singers and their role in society. More importantly, the study provides a context for interpreting Hausa rap lyrics from the critical issues that ultimately resist social inequality into useful practice.¹⁷

Consequently, the present article was framed within the theoretical framework of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) in investigating the Hausa rap lyrics in order to identify how the youth or singers reproduce or resist societal and political manifestations in their lyrics. This is due to the fact that, SFL reflects the relationship between language and the context in which it is used in spoken or written configuration in rhetorical forms.¹⁸ Practically, this study ascertains with SFL in exploring the functional¹⁹ and rhetorical forms of language use, as well as in discovering the critical issues concerning youth identity found in Hausa rap lyrics.

The theoretical basis of SFL functions in the spoken and written stratum of context and contributes to the social construction of language use for literacy education.²⁰ This is because of the fact that SFL is a functionalist theory which has developed, combining purely structural information with overtly social factors in a single integrated narrative.²¹ In relation to this, this study relates Hausa rap lyrics to language use to symbolise youth identity found in the lyrics having both social and personal cognition of the singers. Hausa rap singers employ language mediums in systemic form which can be interpreted in a way that SFL affirms that languages evolve within social groups and is multidimensional in nature.

Establishing youth identity and social construction of discourse in Hausa rap

Globally, rap is a musical form which is often created by a specialised ‘beat maker’, and elements of ‘turn tabling’, in which portions of material created by other

¹⁶ John Flowerdew and Simon Ho Wang, ‘Identity in Academic Discourse’, *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, Vol. 35, 2015, pp. 81–99.

¹⁷ Paul Seedhouse, ‘Framework for Conceptualising Learning in Applied Linguistics’, in *Conceptualising Learning in Applied Linguistics*, Paul Seedhouse, Stave Walsh and Chris Jenks (eds), New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, pp. 240–249.

¹⁸ Ken Hyland, ‘Genre: Language, Context, and Literacy’, *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, Vol. 22, p. 119.

¹⁹ Ken Hyland, ‘Genre, Discipline and Identity’, *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 2015, pp. 1–12, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap> (accessed 5 February 2015).

²⁰ John Flowerdew, *Academic Discourse*, London: Routledge Publishing, 2014.

²¹ Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday and Jonathan J. Webster, *Continuum Companion to Systemic Functional Linguistics*, London & New York: Continuum Publishing, 2009.

performers are creatively recombined and used to frame the lyrics.²² Usually, the studies done in the perspectives of rap music in the African context bear witness to researchers justifying their experience by regarding it as a global tradition that owes core expressive features to a precise western mainstream.²³

Classically, in Nigeria it was affirmed that rap music as popular culture has a relatively recent history that gained popularity in the 1990s.²⁴ In reality, in northern Nigeria, Hausa rap songs, composed predominantly among the youth, became more accepted and popularised in the 21st century.²⁵ Hence, the Hausa rap singers composed their songs either in groups or individually. They employ hip-hop beats in singing the lyrics; using varying degrees and mixtures of their native language Hausa, English and Pidgin English.

Typically, native Hausa youths trying to model themselves within the conventions of global rap singers, have framed their native identities to reflect their admiration. As such, Hausa rap singers structured their ideology in a specific way in order to reveal their identity. They mixed-up traditional culture with foreign ethics, and modified their language in creating a new scene of music in Hausa popular culture. In addition, they advocated the voicing of their opinions with the aid of the internet²⁶; particularly through social media networking, YouTube, and the use of Bluetooth etc., in transmitting messages to their audience. These and various other attributes played a key role in heavily differentiating Hausa rap songs from the traditional Hausa oral songs. Therefore, various scholars agreed that social construction frames a global culture in rap music²⁷ learned, and serves as a behaviour²⁸ that sums up the knowledge and beliefs of the youth.

In light of this, the present article affirms that Hausa rap music reflects the hybridity and the multiplicity of linguistic media, also along with cultural allegiances among the natives. This is because, as declared earlier in this paper, Hausa rap music has become one of the latest 'hip-hop' communities in northern Nigeria to begin grappling with the ideas of hip-hop culture, its genuineness, and linking themselves to a broader

²² Russel Potter, *Spectacular Vernaculars: Hip-hop and the Politics of Postmodernism*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995, p. 1.

²³ Beck, 'Urban Languages...'

²⁴ Omoniyi, 'Hip-hop through the World Englishes...', pp. 195–208.

²⁵ Professor Sa'idu Muhammad Gusau's *Wakokin Baka a Kasar Hausa: Yanaye-Yanayensu da Sigoginsu* [Hausa Oral Songs: Their Types and Features], Kano, Nigeria: Benchmark Publishers Limited, 2008, p. 354, reveals the historical foundation of Rap music as well as the emergence of Hip-Hop culture among Hausa youth. In his book, Gusau affirms on Hausa rap songs does not refer to a birth of new genre, but rather a sub-genre of Hausa oral composition where youth express their feelings and discuss about the societal issues within their own rationale. In addition, he added that Hausa rap songs can be attributed partly from the mainstream of Hausa popular culture that already exists. It has earned its place in the spectrum of the Hausa music scene portraying Hausa modern cultures and history in a wider view. He also believed that Hausa rap singers borrowed culture heavily from the western cultures, and the instrument they use are modern related not the ones Hausa oral singers are familiar with.

²⁶ Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, Cambridge: Polity Publishing, 1992.

²⁷ Michael Fell and Caroline Sporleder, 'Lyrics-Based Analysis and Classification of Music', *Proceedings of the COLING 2014: International Conference on Computational Linguistics Technical Papers*, pp. 620–631, Dublin: Centre for Global Intelligent (CNGL) Publishing, 2014.

²⁸ Campbell, 'Rapping Gender and Violence? Addressing Violence...', pp. 1–70.

global hip-hop community. The Hausa rap singers attempt to define authentic hip-hop music and culture; in order to establish mechanisms for the maintenance of hip-hop authenticity within global perspective.

Categorically, Hausa rap singers' naming identities borrow heavily from the Nigerian national hip-hop scene; for instance the likes of 2Face; Innocent Uyah Idibia, Nigeria, JJC/Skillz; Abdul Rasheed Bello, UK-Nigeria, Lagbaja; Bisade Ologunde. In addition, they borrow heavily identities from the American music scene with the likes of Nas; Nasir Jones, USA, Puff Daddy/P.Diddy/Diddy; Sean Combs, USA, 2Pac; Tupac Amaru Shakur, USA, Dr. Dre; Andre Young, 50 Cent; Curtis Jackson, etc.²⁹ Hausa rap singers also construct such kinds of name tagging, which are interpreted in nature and can be used to understand their mode of social practice. In the present article the naming culture is further elaborated upon in table 1.

Table 1. Hausa rap singers' hip-hop name tagging

| S/No. | Hip-hop name | Proper name |
|-------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. | MixerBash | Idris Bashir Abubakar |
| 2. | Ziriums | Nazir Ahmad Hausawa |
| 3. | Dr. Pure | Saifullahi Idris Musa |
| 4. | Nomiiss Gee | Aminu Abba Umar |
| 5. | Yaro2K | Yahaya Sabo Abubakar |
| 6. | Abokina X'Dough | Ahmad Babajo |
| 7. | I.Q | Abubakar Nasidi Muhammad |
| 8. | Golden Brickz | Hamza Umar |
| 9. | Lil'T | Tijjani Mustapha Danbatta |
| 10. | Funkiest/Funky Mallam | Ibrahim Baba |
| 11. | Daddy Fresh | Jamal |
| 12. | Volcano | Muhammad Salisu Nasidi |
| 13. | X'Dogginit | Iliyasu Achimugu |
| 14. | Double Trouble | Nuraddeen Abubakar |
| 15. | D'Flecks | Abdul Kabala Ghana |
| 16. | BMW | Hamza Umar |
| 17. | MM Haruna | Haruna Mu'azu Muhammad |
| 18. | DFlex | N/A |
| 19. | Naza & NigNash | N/A |
| 20. | Prince Zango | Adam A. Zango |

²⁹ See Omoniyi, 'Hip-hop through the World Englishes...', pp. 195–208, for comprehensive analysis regarding name tagging among the Nigerian and American hip-hop singers.

As the case may be, some of these Hausa rap singers are graduates, some are still studying at university, others are at the colleges, and some are even school drop-out. As such, their musical lyrics share experience in accordance with their level of exposure and education. However, there is one key issue in particular in which they unanimously share, and that is the use of 'artistic licence' through which they express themselves, reveal their identities, and through which they publicly voice their feelings more importantly to their listeners or followers. Similar trends were noted concerning the construction of youth identity in Hausa rap songs in which the singers relate to issues pertinent to northern Nigeria and the country at large.

The singers' voices their personalities on matters concerning ethnic and religious barriers, the rate of unemployment in the country, frequent marital divorce and other affairs concerning deprivation in the northern region, including adultery and fornication, AIDS, drug abuse, corruption, bad politics, etc., are often found in Hausa rap music. More precisely, Hausa rap music brings into play language use in order to share social representation and opinion based on cognitive influence in discourse which is governed by the collective action of the groups. This argument can be further supported by an example from the song of "Life" composed by Abaje featuring ALAN WAKA; and in their lyrics they reflect on bad governance³⁰ and politics in Nigeria, they voice their malady and yearning for God's intervention by saying:

CHORUS

Rabbana (God) fight for us! *Rabbana* (God) relieve us!
 From the venom of a cobra, the curse of a tiger,
 From the hands of the shameful good-for-nothing politicians,
 A-pull them negatively, hunt them mentally, depend me!
 I hate to see my society in agony, life! life!
 Stop all the sufferings! And make a better Nigeria!
 What a Life! Life! Life! Lets get back to our valuable senses!
 Our leaders are over drunk with power steering clear out of truth!
 With their decayed hearts they have allowed the masses to be suffering, Oh God!

Abaje featuring ALAN WAKA, "Life"

Essentially the lyrics above reflect on the social power abuse, dominance and inequality that enact within the Nigerian system of governance in which they show their resistance. This goes with the affirmation that the CDA confirms, specifically the freedom of challenging power and dominance that exists in society or in governance by those who are oppressed. They are oppressed not only by the lack of good governance but they are also demoralised by a lack of patronage, particularly from the government.

In circumstances, various Hausa rap singers actively introduce a variety of themes into their lyrics signifying the extravagances on the part of the politicians and other

³⁰ Teun van Dijk, *Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction*, London: Sage Publication Limited, 2010.

government officials that allow various issues and problems to survive in Nigeria particularly in the more peripheral areas. Yet, they firmly believe that Hausa rap will continue to develop and they will keep on voicing their feelings, opinions, observations, yearnings, and identities both nationally and internationally, until they are heeded. Likewise, they aspire on a possible future by striving hard to be acknowledged, particularly by the different foreign global media, with the hope and assumption of having foreign sponsors.

In fact, culture in general and its effects on music and composition serves as an important turning point in the history of Hausa rap. Albeit, it is important to note that Hausa rap music has always been about cultural expression and not necessarily concerned with the proper use of language. The basic interest of Hausa rap singers is to help their listeners or viewers, regardless of where they are, to hear and see the social, educational, political, economic, and often religious situation in which the artist dwells. For instance, Kano Ryderz (K-Ryderz) lived in a rugged area in the Kano state of Nigeria, popularly known as Brigade Quarters. They have grown within the locality of Kano and experience nothing other than maltreatment from the government making their locale one of the most underdeveloped in the state. Hence, they compose a song “Everyday inside Difficulty” and excerpts from the lyrics read as follows:

LEAD

The tough life in this country has permeated everywhere confusing us,
 The poor are constantly suffering, where’s the country’s wealth?
 The big shots have stolen the lot, there is hunger everywhere!
 And they know it! Rulers! Please pity the people!
 Having bricks houses! Ours are made of mud and collapse during the rains!
 They keep the leadership amongst themselves only!
 When you are fearless, they ostracize you!
 No school! No education! No drugs in hospitals! No social development!
 They are heartless, and refused to help!
 See! We have lots of natural resources! Why should we be suffering! Suffering!!!
 Don’t forget the big fat cats, with massive pot bellies,
 Are the ones who stole the wealth of our nation!

Kano Ryderz, “Everyday inside Difficulty”

Therefore, to better comprehend how Hausa rap songs developed in hip-hop culture among Hausa youth there is a need to understand that in the early 21st century, many of the Hausa youth taught themselves how to rap by imitating the lyrics, mannerisms, and gestures of the hip-hop artists they were hearing, particularly American hip-hop artists; primarily 2Pac, MC Hammer, the Notorious BIG, Puff Daddy, LL Cool J and R-Kelly, to mention but a few. They listened to the rap cassettes, repeatedly until they could mimic the English lyrics and which they later on could relate to their own experience.

To a certain extent, Hausa rap singers do not mind differentiating between the American artists, but they are rather more interested in the projection of the words

until the rhyming and flow of the song is captured by the ears of their listeners. In due search of meaning and viable feeling to their songs, they mostly begin by mimicking the songs composed by an American rap artists and those of their Nigerian counterparts, on discotheque floors and during various social events such as finishing secondary school, graduation from university, and so on.

This was further influenced by the advent of the CD audio player and video digital devices as well as the acquisition of cable satellites channels from where Hausa youth clearly observe and 'tune-in' to American hip-hop artists. Subsequently, the global media flows of the internet³¹ facilitated by Bluetooth; popular social media accounts including, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube; blog pages such as Arewa Vogue, Hip-Hop Empire; television stations with the likes of Arewa 24, Star Times; FM radio stations especially, Freedom Radio in Kano, Cool FM in Kano, Wazobia FM in Kano, Rahama Radio in Kano, and so on; heralded the need for Hausa rap music scene to establish its own kind of hip-hop culture and rap music genre.

Extensively, in Hausa native society, rap songs are considered to be voices of youth culture as well a way to express the reality of living. In addition, Hausa rap music embraced the hip-hop culture as a framework to develop their own ideas pertinent to African lifestyles. Nazir Ahmad Hausawa popularly known as Ziriums or Nazir Khan or Dantala released the Hausa rap album, *Nod Your Head*, and an extract from one song's lyrics reads as follows:

LEAD

Hey! do not dance; you know they banned it!
 The governor of our city one day banned it!
 If you *hear a good beat, just nod your head alone!*
 Yeah! If you have heard a good beat, just nod your head alone!

Ziriums, "Nod! And Wobble Your Head All Alone"

Needless to say Hausa rap singers encounter lots of economic difficulties and as such the avenue of releasing albums in accordance with hip-hop culture is somewhat closed. As a result they rely heavily on the availability of internet, radio channels and Bluetooth devices. Even so, and contrary to the government, their lyrics immediately became a sensation all over the northern Nigeria and in many ways, set a high standard and 'raised the bar' for future Hausa rappers. The government perceived the nuances and aggravation of the Hausa youths to be greatly westernised, which was perceived as working to exploit the traditional

³¹ Here, for further knowledge concerning the influence of global media and its flows in northern Nigerian popular cultures, refer to the studies conducted by Professor Abdallah Uba Adamu: *Transglobal Media Flows and African Popular Culture: Revolutions and Reaction in Muslim Hausa Popular Culture*, Kano: Visually Ethnographic Productions, 2007; Abdalla Uba Adamu, 'Media Technology and Literary Transformations in Hausa Oral Literature', in *From Oral Literature to Video: The Case of Hausa*, Joseph McIntyre and Mechthild Reh (eds), Koln: Germany; Abdalla Uba Adamu, 'Transnational Media Flows and Contra-Flows: Shifting Paradigms in South-South Entertainment Flows', *Hemispheres. Studies on Cultures and Societies*, No. 27, 2012, pp. 63–90.

culture and moral values. As such Hausa rap singers' have faced difficult situations including imprisonment by an overbearing government. In retaliation Hausa rap music responded with vulgar language, unusual in the culture of Hausa rap singers. For example, Ziriums retaliated with a song "This Is Me", in which the singer affirms:

LEAD

I'm hustling like motorcycle taxi driver, night and day, until the morning,
 In the time of the cool, rains and in the hot season, and in the night,
 It is hip-hop that I love! I will never retire! Will never get tired!
 Cause I'm rolling like a tire! Go on go on all you hip-hop guys!
 You hip-hop boyz, wealth comes to an end, power passes away!
 Road cut off! If you are going to say something, tell the truth!
 Allah, much less hasn't given me body strength,
 To go out to meet you and huddle you up,
 But, Allah made me a sharp mouth, sharper than a blade, aha!

Ziriums, "This Is Me"

Moreover, in his own version of the song "God Damn It" Lil'T composed lyrics in a way much more characteristic of many popular American rap songs. Mostly, Hausa rap singers develop their lyrics reflecting the Hausa cultural, social, and ideological positions. Yet, Lil'T demonstrates his agony in a vulgar language; even though these wordings are prominent in the rap music they hear from the United States. An extract from the lyrics is illustrative:

LEAD

Nigeria is 50, why we no see any good thing?
 Why waste so much on golden anniversary?
 When *Naija* no get common electricity!
 We dey produce fuel we no get refinery!
 When *Naija* no get common electricity! Why bomb no go blow for FCT?
 Our education no authority? No respect for the living!
 Nor the dead can see, this no be *Naija* wey our heroes build!
 Politicians na *dem* get money today, we go vote for dem,
 We go still dey follow dem, why be dat way? Me I no feel tell!
 Servant and master na who go ring bell? *Yallabai*?
 Help me! I need some food, my wife is pregnant and my child is sick,
 My lanlord wanted me out of my suits, please help me! Help me *oga*!
 God damn it!

Lil'T, "God Damn It"

From a documentary conducted by CNN on Hausa rap music in northern Nigeria, Johnson and Piracha reveals that the concept of message assertion in Hausa rap music comes up again-and-again in their songs. By virtue of this fact, they placed emphasis on the fact that their songs reflect the social function of the music and

language use is the significant vehicle for transmitting meaning effectively. But the chiefly negative role played by the government provoked Hausa rap music into conveying messages in their songs with a far stronger voice.

As an example of this, Prince Zango popularly known within the Kannywood film industry was found entering the domain of rap music. In his song “Adam Zango Oh Yo-yo” he revealed his anger with government policies which he believed to be unjust. The singer was found saying:

LEAD

I will sing a song about that horrible servant,
Jackass, who hides behind the façade of Islam,
 Some Islamic teachers are pious, while others are just Shamans,
 Some beards are honourable, while others are just Billy-goat's beard,
 Well *Barau* (thief), you have arrested me and locked me up,
 In the end you jailed me, and I'm happy for it,
 This is not Allah or His Prophet's jail sentence,
 Nor it is ordained by Islam, *Barau* (thief),
 If it is your jailing, well command the judge to incarcerate me,
 Or slit my throat, or shoot me, or in the end totally condemn me.

Prince Zango, “Adam Zango Oh Yo-yo”

Clearly, Prince Zango seems unappreciative of the imposition of governmental course of action; and as such he prefers to use the medium of hip-hop culture to portray his readiness to jump right from the proverbial ‘frying pan into the fire’. Thus, in Hausa rap music history the periods of the 21st century have played a significant role in testifying the role of youth and their identity in discourse and social construct. Prince Zango further added this to his repertoire:

LEAD

Oh! Allah we beseech you; we will not forgive this injustice,
 Allah, we will not allow this; Allah punish my tormentors,
 The government has arrested me; Allah please arrest them,
 The government has locked me up; Allah please locked them up,
 The government has jailed me; Allah please jailed them in the hereafter,
 And reward my patience!
 Eh! The song, does not refer to any specific person,
 If it describe your behaviour listen, and stop,
 The world is a scary place; a novice is not used to it,
 Even an expert has to learn to endure it.

Prince Zango, “Adam Zango Oh Yo-yo”

Fundamentally, within the discursive field of Hausa rap music due to the anguish of the singers aimed at the government officials, different perspectives on language use have arisen from the complex weave of contemporary music and life as experienced by Hausa youth. Primarily, youths employ the domain of Hausa rap

music to establish their identity. Thus, in the same song “This Is Me” composed by Ziriums; the Hausa rap singer relieved his anguish by saying:

LEAD

Let’s meet there in the day of judgment!
 Where you will suffer the loneliness of your father!
 No police to escort you! No Siren! You’ll see a terrible go-slow!
 There to the side the angel of hell with a rod of thorns,
 If you make a mistake, he’ll give you a stiff beating,
 The joints in you will give testimony,
 That day there will be no P.A.! No lawyer!
 If you are to say something, utter the truth!

Ziriums, “This Is Me”

It is pertinent to understand that, rap music culture allows youth to construct their identities in an avenue that might not be freely available elsewhere; and language use in a musical context will provide material for considering the nexus of popular music, language choice, and the social creation of an identity for Hausa youths.

Conclusion

Hausa rap lyrics often speak directly to social and cultural issues pertinent to the northern youth and the country at large. The present article explores the Hausa rap genre within the approach of the CDA, which stems from a critical theory of language use. Consequently, the approach to CDA recognizes institutionalized forms of dominance, which, for the current article, ties into SFL that sees language use as a form of social practice. The paper focuses on the lyrics of the Hausa rap genre and the intersections and interrelationships between language, discourse, speech and social interactions.

It was made clear in the article that Hausa rap singers’ uses hip-hop culture to explain their anger and questioning of government policies. Hausa rap singers use music as a medium of communicating ideas, emotions and feelings, taking the music beyond the simple notion of a good time, by illuminating the problems faced by Hausa society. The songs released to date so far, all emphasize problems faced by Nigerians at large.

By and large, the presented extracts from the songs have arisen when artists, whether they are Hausa rappers, film actors and actresses, traditional oral singers, etc., being formerly detained as a result of government guiding principles. Furthermore, such influences have forced Hausa rap singers to completely lose their faith with the government and instead of following their traditional cultural flow of modest youth music; they have sought an extreme western portrayal of youth identity and the use of unsympathetic language in hip-hop culture.

As a result, the flow of language use in Hausa rap songs is employed as a means of social construction and a complex means of communication, depending on the ability of the singers in expressing their ideas, hypotheses, emotions, desires, and all

other things needed to be expressed in the music. To sum up, youth identity and social construction of discourse in Hausa rap songs took on increasingly deviant dimensions in the last few years due to miscommunication and misperceptions between the government and the youth where each side tried to institute its base. To a certain extent this is so due to the fact that language use is significant in register formation, and it explains the kind of message intended to be passed, which is fuelled by language ideology.

In conclusion, there have been researches conducted within the domain of applied linguistics concerning approaches to youth identities, particularly in those areas of critical discourse analysis, narrative analysis, conversation analysis, corpus linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and so forth. Therefore, the present article contributes partly to the theoretical studies concerning social issues in applied linguistics, as well as the contribution of discourse features into understanding Hausa rap lyrics as a type of popular culture.